

Amendment and Response

Applicant: Ray Mentzer

Serial No.: 10/008,968

Filed: December 6, 2001

Docket No.: 10010675-1

Title: APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR OBTAINING AVERAGE SCENE INTENSITY INFORMATION FROM A PHOTO DETECTOR ARRAY

REMARKS

The following remarks are made in response to the Non-Final Office Action mailed May 11, 2005. In that Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6-11, and 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fossum et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,949,483 ("Fossum"). The Examiner's indication that claims 4, 5, and 12 are allowable if rewritten to overcome all rejections and that claims 17-20 are allowed is noted with appreciation.

With this Response, claims 1 and 13 have been amended. Claims 1-16 remain pending in the application and are presented for reconsideration and allowance.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

In the Office Action, claims 1-3, 6-11 and 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fossum et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,949,483 ("Fossum"). Amended independent claim 1 recites an optical sensor array. The optical sensor array comprises an array of pixel circuits, each pixel circuit including a photo detector, a voltage supply line, and an output node for outputting image signals from the pixel circuit, wherein the voltage supply line of each pixel circuit is connected to a common node separate from the output node; a voltage supply input configured to be coupled to a voltage supply and to the common node for supplying a voltage to each pixel circuit; and a sensing circuit coupled to the common node for sensing signals at the common node and outputting at least one signal representative of an average intensity of light directed onto the array of pixel circuits.

Thus, as shown above, claim 1 recites both an output node for outputting image signals from the pixel circuit, and a common node at which signals are sensed by the sensing circuit. Fossum does not teach or suggest both an output node and a common node as recited in claim 1. Rather, as shown in Fig. 3A of Fossum, the pixel circuit includes a single node for outputting signals (i.e., the node located between FETs 60 and 65).

In view of the above, Fossum does not teach or suggest each and every limitation of independent claim 1. The Applicant respectfully requests removal of the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and requests allowance of this claim. Since dependent claims 2, 3, and 6-11 further limit patentably distinct claim 1, claims 2, 3, and 6-11 are believed to be allowable over the cited reference, and allowance of claims 2, 3, and 6-11 is respectfully requested.

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Amended independent claim 13 is directed to a method of obtaining average scene intensity information from a pixel array. The pixel array includes a plurality of pixel circuits. Each pixel circuit is coupled to a common node that is configured to be coupled to a voltage supply. Each pixel circuit includes an output node for outputting image signals from the pixel circuit. The method comprises isolating the pixel circuits from the voltage supply; sensing signals at the common node generated by the plurality of pixel circuits; and generating at least one signal based on the sensed signals, the at least one signal representative of an average intensity of light directed onto the pixel array.

Thus, as shown above, claim 13 recites both an output node for outputting image signals from the pixel circuit, and a common node at which signals are sensed. Fossum does not teach or suggest both an output node and a common node as recited in claim 13. Rather, as shown in Fig. 3A of Fossum, the pixel circuit includes a single node for outputting signals (i.e., the node located between FETs 60 and 65).

In view of the above, Fossum does not teach or suggest each and every limitation of independent claim 13. The Applicant respectfully requests removal of the rejection of claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and requests allowance of this claim. Since dependent claims 14-16 further limit patentably distinct claim 13, claims 14-16 are believed to be allowable over the cited reference, and allowance of claims 14-16 is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 4, 5, and 12 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 4, 5, and 12 further define patentably distinct claim 1, and allowance of claims 4, 5, and 12 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are in form for allowance and are not taught or suggested by the cited references. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of all pending claims is respectfully requested.

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No fees are required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16(h)(i). However, if such fees are required, the Patent Office is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1078.

The Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's representative at the below-listed telephone numbers to facilitate prosecution of this application.

Any inquiry regarding this Amendment and Response should be directed to either Pamela Lau Kee at Telephone No. (408) 553-3059, Facsimile No. (408) 553-3063 or Jeff A. Holmen at Telephone No. (612) 573-0178, Facsimile No. (612) 573-2005. In addition, all correspondence should continue to be directed to the following address:

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Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.8:

The undersigned hereby certifies that this paper or papers, as described herein, are being deposited in the United States Postal Service, as first class mail, in an envelope address to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on this 9th day of August, 2005.

By Jeff A. Holmen
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